

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

DATE: May 22, 2006

Committee Members Present:

Supervisors Barody
Monroe
Mason
Champagne
F. Thomas
Kenny

Committee Member Absent:

Supervisor Stec

Others Present:

Representing Economic Development Corporation:

Leonard Fosbrook, President

Peter Wohl, Director, Adirondack Regional
Business Incubator

John Wheatley, Project Manager, Queensbury
Industrial Park

William H. Thomas, Chairman

Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative &
Fiscal Services

Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board

Supervisor Caimano

Supervisor Merlino

Supervisor Geraghty

Supervisor Gabriels

Supervisor Sheehan

William Lamy, Deputy Superintendent DPW

Debra L. Schreiber, Legislative Office Specialist

Mr. Barody called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2006 meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. Fosbrook, who distributed copies of his agenda packet to members of the committee, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Commencing with the first item on the Agenda, I-87 Multimodal Study, Mr. Fosbrook apprised this study was initiated approximately three years ago seeking funds with the assistance of Congressman Sweeney. He said the committee consisted of Nicholas Caimano, Marshall Stevens, William Remington, Chris Round (Town of Queensbury Planner) and himself, who developed and lobbied for four critical priorities including the I-87 Exit 18 corridor, improvements at the airport, the scenic rail as well as improvements in traffic flow from Exit 20/Route 149. They were not overly successful in achieving high priority status with the projects within Warren County, he stated, other than the Exit 18 corridor. Within the study, he said, New York State had already allotted a million dollars through the Interstate Maintenance Funds and that would essentially pay for the connector road. He said he discussed this allotment of funds with Mr. Lamy who anticipated meeting with the State Department of Transportation (DOT) officials relatively soon to insure the funds existed. Mr. Barody queried about the other funds that were earmarked for the connector road and Mr. Fosbrook replied Mr. Lamy would determine what funds were available and where they existed. Also included in the study, Mr. Fosbrook stated, Senator Little initiated a process to have cell phone towers installed in the "black out" sections of the Northway from Warren County to Plattsburgh to increase the connections. It was Congressman Sweeney's desire to designate a corridor on the federal level so he had the ability to seek funds and, he noted, that was accomplished through the

study. With respect to the installation of cell phone towers, Mr. Monroe mentioned there was discussion about putting trailers at the rest areas and he queried whether that had changed. Mr. Fosbrook responded it was a Tier I project addressing the black out areas on the Northway that would tie into a broad range of programs and benefits from self-service to emergency call boxes for drivers in the area. He added there was very little additional planning necessary to implement the program which had gone through the design phase and had been reviewed by the Adirondack Park Agency (APA).

Messrs. Gabriels, Sheehan and Mrs. Parsons entered the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

Referring to Item II of the Agenda, North Creek Ski Bowl, Mr. Fosbrook advised he had included a complete history of the project dating back to 2002 when a study was initiated with the SE Group to determine if a connection could be made between the North Creek Ski Bowl and Gore Mountain. He noted the last page of the Gore Mountain/Ski Bowl status report reflected the outstanding issues. Mr. Fosbrook expounded The Residents Committee to protect the Adirondacks filed a lawsuit against ORDA (Olympic Regional Development Authority), the Town of Johnsburg, NYS DEC (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation), FrontStreet (the developer) and APA. In his conversations with the attorneys involved in this lawsuit, he related it was not well-founded but served its purpose to be an obstruction. In addition, he related the lawsuit was filed by John Caffry, attorney for the Adirondack Park Agency, who stated the project was "too big."

Mrs. Parsons exited the meeting at 10:43 a.m.

Mr. Fosbrook stated the Zone Administrator Board dedicated one of its six boundaries to North Creek in order to enhance development and serve the skiing population. The boundary review passed all phases of approval and was under review at the State level; therefore, he surmised it would be approved in the near future. The developer had filed their plans with the APA for approval and suspected it would be protracted; however, he stated in discussions with the LA Group, they felt comfortable with their completed application.

In collaboration with all the current projects and activities, Mr. Fosbrook commented that it was suggested EDC (Economic Development Corporation), the North Creek Ski Bowl Committee and the Chamber of Commerce schedule a celebration event in Johnsburg towards the end of June to thank Congressman Sweeney, Senator Little and Assemblywoman Sayward for their efforts in this project. He stated they had commenced organizing the event and were hopeful everyone would be able to attend. Mr. Fosbrook recommended holding the event at the North Creek Ski Bowl on June 30, 2006 but was awaiting a response from the elected officials. As an economic development organization in the County, he stated it was important to demonstrate their support of the project while it was undergoing APA approval.

Continuing on with Item III of the Agenda, Empire Zone, Mr. Fosbrook reminded the committee at the beginning of 2006 they resubmitted a new Economic Development plan according to the new legislation, which included six non-contiguous zone boundaries chosen for the County. Relative to the outstanding issues of the Empire Zone on the last page, he advised there was a meeting of the Zone Administrative Board to examine the capital credits used to recruit funding for different community projects as well investors in small business. He stated they authorized changes to the plan and recommended additional capital credits be put forth in the community project category due to the success in assisting other organizations such as the Glens Falls Hospital, The Hyde

Collection and Wood Theater. Mr. Fosbrook explained the credits gave the donor an additional deduction on their NYS income tax. Due to the new legislation, he said they were organizing an informational/educational meeting wherein they would bring people from NYS Department of Taxation and Finance and people involved with the Empire Zone to clarify any issues that had arisen between the old and new legislation benefits. In addition, he noted they received the annual BAR reports that were sent to companies that had been certified on the progress of their business, jobs that had been added, investments that had been made and it allowed the State to analyze the success of the program. Mr. Fosbrook stated his department included data so they could report to the committee the impact the program has had on the County relative to increased tax payments, sales tax, occupancy tax and job creation. He informed the members of the committee there was not a zone in the State that was functioning because the plans had not been fully approved. However, while Warren County was one of the first ten approved through all other phases, he said he just received an additional information request. Mr. Caimano suggested contacting the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) and ask for their assistance. As a side note, Mr. Fosbrook apprised that Peter Wohl, Director of Adirondack Regional Business Incubator, secured a copy of the democratic proposal for economic development should they be in a position to augment it. Mr. Monroe queried about the proposed wind power project, whether anything could be done with the Empire Zone if they received approval and Mr. Fosbrook responded due to the location selected, the expense would outweigh the advantage.

William Lamy, Deputy Superintendent of the Department of Public Works, entered the meeting at 10:55 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to John Wheatley, Project Manager of the Queensbury Industrial Park (QIP). As reported at the previous meeting, the Phase II Archeological Review was underway and he stated, SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) had specified a certain technique for consultants to utilize called transect plowing. He explained this plowing consisted of a long stripe which created a small ditch on one end so the archeologists could use a shovel to scrape and identify subsurface features. They completed the process but they discovered some subsurface stains of unknown origin; however, Mr. Wheatley stated SHPO could not assign any significance to the stains. After the archeologists completed this phase of their investigation, he said they sat down with the consultants to discuss the results and how to proceed. Mr. Wheatley stated they decided to investigate the approximately 20 "stains" to determine conclusively whether the stains had any prehistoric significance, primarily in the areas of the QIP that would impact development; namely the road, Lots 2, 8, 9 and possibly 3. Thereafter, he noted a report would be comprised that would be forwarded on to SHPO. In discussions with the archeological team, Mr. Wheatley advised nothing was found in the eight or nine studies currently completed.

Regarding the Chairman's question about the Town of Queensbury Planning Ordinance Review Committee (PORC), Mr. Wheatley apprised they had been following the activities over the last six to eight months. He related there were a number of public meetings and forums and the Town of Queensbury requested input from EDC and Saratoga Associates. Approximately two weeks ago, he noted, they became aware of a "land use" map that was posted on the Town of Queensbury website for certain areas of the town. Mr. Wheatley stated there were areas that were currently zoned light industrial, including the QIP and some of the land on Quaker Road, which were targeted for Empire Zone that were recommended for residential use. He related his department prepared a list of concerns and communicated them to the PORC and last week the Town of Queensbury revised the map. Mr. Champagne queried if this was the Master Plan the Town of

Queensbury was in the process of developing and Mr. Barody replied affirmatively. Mr. Wheatley indicated it was his belief the revisions (May 18, 2006) satisfied the concerns of EDC but they would continue to follow the Town of Queensbury PORC progress. Mr. Fosbrook commented the decisions that were made in the Town of Queensbury impacted the workforce and job availability throughout the County but they were comfortable it was where it should be. With the assistance of Congressman Sweeney and Jim Clark, Mr. Fosbrook mentioned his department had applied for an EDA (Economic Development Agency) grant for the shortfall in the cost of the infrastructure, \$613,000, which would be forwarded on to the Town of Queensbury because eventually, the road would be dedicated to them.

Mr. Fosbrook indicated they had been in contact with the National Guard and informed the committee the contract had been approved but it needed to be executed by the Attorney General's Office so they could close on the property.

Mr. W. Thomas entered the meeting at 11:02 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Peter Wohl, Director of Adirondack Regional Business Incubator (ARBI) who announced they were sponsoring an event titled "Thinkubator" on June 8, 2006. He said he would like to distribute posters to the committee members and anyone else to help inform the community. Mr. Wohl stated the purpose of the Thinkubator was to identify potential tenants as well as introducing ARBI and their supporting partners (including the County) to the region to inform them they were serious about promoting entrepreneurship. He indicated it was an all day event that invited people with ideas or concepts for an innovative business to apply either online or by phone. Mr. Barody stated this was a precursor to getting people to think about the Adirondack Regional Business Incubator. They recently put out an RFP (request for proposal) for a new architect and he said he anticipated receiving that shortly. In addition, Mr. Barody advised the Brownsfield work was expected to commence soon, as well as receiving a positive response from SHPO on the building.

With respect to Exit 18, Mr. Lamy advised there were a number of items that needed to be accomplished in order for construction to commence in the spring of 2007. He stated he previously reported the utility design had been completed and transferred electronically to the consulting firms. He explained the next step was the completion of the highway maps and utility easements for each property identified on the Corinth Road-Broad Street-Main Street corridor. Within the next few weeks, Mr. Lamy confirmed that all involved parties had been invited by the consultants to review and identify any construction conflicts before the final drawings and specifications were developed. At that point, he said he was hopeful to share the maps and drawings with the elected officials before procuring the right-of-way strips and easements. A meeting had been scheduled with DOT in June to review the funding sources and clarify the necessary appropriations and he said he expected that to last over the summer. In addition, Mr. Lamy asked the consultant to update their cost estimate but confirmed he had received a cost estimate from National Grid relative to underground electric, which he questioned.

Relative to the connector road, Mr. Lamy stated he spoke with Daniel Stec, Town of Queensbury Supervisor, who indicated he was hopeful construction would commence in the fall of 2006. He emphasized upon the completion of the connector road, they would utilize that road as part of the detail plan for the Corinth Road Corridor project.

Mr. Lamy apprised the bid would be awarded and construction would proceed this year for the Route 9 and 254 intersection as well as the Quaker Road signal project. The City of Glens Falls had discussed commencing construction on the round-about and Warren County anticipated commencing construction next year on the Corinth Road. It was imperative that all parties communicate and stage construction to avoid gridlock within the County, he added.

Mr. Barody stated there were certain funds that were earmarked for the connector road and certain projects related to the connector road as well as the possibility of \$1 million for the multimodal study that Congressman Sweeney secured. He asked Mr. Lamy to update the committee at the next meeting whether other monies had been secured, could they be used and how much. Mr. Lamy responded DOT had been extremely helpful and he looked forward to meeting them.

Mr. Barody queried if there were any PORC issues relative to the connector road and Mr. Wheatley responded there was concern but the revised map depicted the connector lands that would be developed as being targeted for residential use.

Mr. Champagne said he thought the Town of Queensbury had funded a portion of the connector road and Mr. Fosbrook replied affirmatively. In addition, he mentioned the City of Glens Falls was obligated to pay up to 20% of the project and if the road was funded federally, there could be the potential of left over funds.

There being no further business before the Committee, on motion by Mr. Champagne and seconded by Mr. Mason, Mr. Barody adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Schreiber
Legislative Office Specialist